

October 1st marked one year since the congressional moratorium on offshore drilling was allowed to expire, opening up over 500 million acres of the Outer Continental Shelf (OCS) to oil and gas production. However, the U.S. Department of the Interior (DOI), which has jurisdiction over energy development on federal lands and the OCS, has taken no further action to expand domestic oil and gas production and has even restricted production in certain instances. Despite the much-welcomed reprieve from last year's painfully high energy prices, we continue to remain beholden to foreign oil from hostile and unstable regimes as well as the volatility of the global market. Congress has provided the Administration with the ability to address this issue by allowing more offshore drilling, which leaves many of us asking, "where's the oil?"

Several months ago, I expressed my strong [concerns](#) regarding the withdrawal of 77 oil and gas leases on federal land in Utah for "further review." Now the DOI has [announced](#) that it will allow leasing on only 17 of the contested sites, while preventing the development of the remaining 60. This decision is based upon the recommendation of a review team that spent only nine days investigating a lease sale the Bureau of Land Management had spent seven years preparing. Furthermore, the DOI had taken steps to expedite and expand OCS energy production by developing a new 5-year offshore leasing plan for 2010-15 that would replace the current 2007-12 plan. However, upon taking office, the Obama Administration immediately delayed the new plan and has yet to announce any intention to implement it before the current plan expires in 2012.

These examples illustrate a disturbing trend as oil prices reach their highest level this year due to a weak dollar spurred by a record \$1.4 trillion federal deficit. While reduced demand keeps oil prices much lower than last year, the stage is set for a return to triple-digit prices once global demand picks back up. Therefore, I believe that developing the vast energy resources located right in our own backyard is critical to our economic recovery and continued security. According to economic [analysis](#) by the Heritage Foundation, increasing domestic oil production by just one million barrels per day would generate a \$105 billion gain to the economy while increasing the number of jobs by 128,000. It is estimated that one tiny section of the frozen ANWR tundra could produce a million barrels of oil each day for 30 years, while our OCS and oil shale reserves hold the potential to meet our petroleum needs for over a century. Importantly, 21st century technology allows these resources to be recovered in an environmentally-safe manner.

While Congress and the Administration pursue damaging "cap and tax" [legislation](#) that will raise energy prices, ship jobs overseas, and limit economic growth, I continue to advocate for commonsense, comprehensive energypolicy that will allow America to produce its own resources while incentivizing the development of alternative and renewable energy

technologies. The United States has always been a nation that allows prosperity to spur innovation and I will do all I can to make sure that continues as this debate moves forward.